

**GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM**

Friday, December 22, 2006

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

This holiday season, as we gather with family and loved ones to exchange gifts, I hope you'll join me in reflecting on the most precious gift that anyone can give: the gift of service.

For thousands of Michigan men and women service means being stationed far from home this holiday as they serve in our Armed Forces overseas. These soldiers are making the ultimate sacrifice of service ... and so are their families.

It is an incredible hardship to be so far from home in the midst of such danger – to miss the warmth, laughter and joy of the holidays.

But for many, service doesn't take us half way around the globe. The opportunities to serve are endless and for many Michiganders service is a way of life.

In 2006, Michigan citizens were in service to one another in communities all across our state.

More than 7,200 citizens open their homes to abused and neglected children as foster parents this year. Nearly 300 citizens donated organs to help others live. More than 16,000 served as mentors through our Mentor Michigan program – the most ever.

Countless more are involved in volunteer programs through their place of worship or a local service organization or charity.

The opportunities for service are so plentiful because the needs are so great.

So, this holiday season, as you gather in warm living rooms and around bountiful tables, I encourage you to remember those in service – whether fighting in a war zone or fighting a battle against poverty, hunger, loneliness or disease.

I wish you and your family a safe and happy and blessed holiday season.

Thank you for listening.